PRINCIPLES
OF
SACRED ELOQUENCE

CONWAY

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BY

JOHN PLACID CONWAY, O.P.,
Sac. Theol. Mag.

Strip me of everything else in the world, but leave me Eloquence.
—St. Gregory Nazianzen.

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First Part.

I.—ORATORY: ITS NATURE AND CAUSES.

"*Strip me of everything else in the world, but leave me eloquence.*"—St. Gregory Nazianzen.

Oratory, as an Art, was first mooted by Empedocles (B. C. 450), but the oldest existing treatise on the subject is Aristotle's "Rhetoric." Cicero, at a later date, dealt more comprehensively with it in his Essays, as in "The Invention of the Topics," "The Orator, or Brutus," "The Divisions of Oratory," "Of Famous Orators," and "The Orator." In this last work the author, in three books, enters minutely into all the details of the art. "The Institutions" of Quintilian, in twelve books, is the fullest work of the kind in the classical age. Modern writers have added little to the art; their task has been the application of given principles. These pages, in dealing with the second part, or Practical Oratory, are mainly an epitome of Cicero and Quintilian, supplemented by details according to modern usage.

What is Oratory?—It may be defined as the "Art of swaying minds by conviction of the truth through speech." It is something beyond mere knowledge, yet less than a science, since science is the result of demonstration from strictly first principles. Oratory also uses demonstration, but of a secondary order. Its true status is that it is an Art, because of the artificial

structure of its parts. Hence the Roman Orator speaks of it as "Ars bene disserendi"—"The Art of discoursing well." Being above the mechanical order, its place is among the Fine Arts.

There are two classes of the Fine Arts: (1) Those which build in time; (2) those which build in space. The former is of a subtler order: its branches, the Arts themselves—of oratory, music, and poetry, are of a higher quality: the second class is in touch with the crafts, and its branches are architecture, painting, and sculpture. The Greek Rhetors, Poets, and Dramatists, were as truly artists as the painters, sculptors, or architects: Sophocles and Demosthenes were as truly filled with the artistic sense as Phidias or Apelles. If we consider the end of each art in detail, we find that Oratory holds the first place in the foremost rank, since its end is not to gratify sense, but to sway the mind and heart. To Poetry belongs the domain of the imagination, but Oratory claims for its own the highest faculty, the intellect, using the imagination as its handmaid, and having for its end or aim "the conviction of truth" that is, the bringing home of truth to the mind in such fashion as to secure conviction. Passionate it may be, reasonable it must be.

What it is not.—It is no mere declamation; that is acting, or reciting: nor is it the heaping up of fancies in a studied speech; the mere weaving of fancies in the loom of prose is poetry *en déshabillé*. Oratory to be an Art must be inborn, that is, it ought to be the child of our inner self, of our own brain in the concept, of our heart in the fervor, and of our lips in the utterance. He is no Orator who declaims another's speech; he is a reciter, but never an artist, since he lacks the creative faculty. There are others again who conceive the thought excellently and fashion the language admirably, which when listened to borders on failure, when read is a positive treat. These are not Orators but writers, their sphere of action is the press, not the pulpit. The best sermon, if merely read, can never carry away an audience by storm nor fire it with enthusiasm, as results with words poured

direct from the heart. It is commendable, nay a necessity in some cases, but it is not Oratory.

Good articulation and gestures belong to Rhetoric, which is the basis of Oratory; sound periods of English idioms, a good style, an easy manner, are also parts of Rhetoric: sound doctrine is Theology, acute reasoning is Logic, the wholesome application of a point or choice of a subject belong to common sense: but while all of them are the organic parts of a living whole, none of them singly is Oratory. Budding Chrysostoms delude themselves by mistaking talent in a branch for excellence in the whole. Oratory is no one of all these things, but their happy unison from out our own brain.

II.—ITS FOURFOLD CAUSE IN GENERAL.

Sacred Oratory is that noble branch of the foremost Art which has Divine Truth for its subject matter, and is the burden of a holy embassy. It is advisable to catch one's hare before devising how to cook it, and when in hand it is equally profitable to bear in mind that bad cooking spoils good meat. So is it with Sacred Oratory. Poor stuff will glare out in spite of the most taking delivery, and a bad delivery takes the heart out of the soundest discourse. Cicero and St. Augustine assign the same three ends of all Oratory: "Docere, Movere, Placere," "To Instruct, to Stir, to Please." These are secured by the matter, the spirit, and the art.

The exalted character of the preacher lies in this that he images Him who is First Truth both in nature and word, since God's word is the faint manifestation of Himself. The office of the preacher is to spread the word of God which he first possesses, for the servant should be like his Lord in the fulness of grace and of truth.

Oratory as an Art is made up of the harmonious blending of chief causes, and these are four: First, there is the "Efficient Cause," which in the subject matter tutors and makes the preacher. Secondly, there is the "Final,"

which comprises the motives of action, being "ambassadors for Christ's sake." Thirdly, comes the "Formal," which gives the notes and impress of character, thereby revealing the preacher; and, lastly, the "Material Cause," which is the basis of sound doctrine. Every effect is the result of causality: in proportion to the elevated standard of the causes will be the dignity or worth of the effects. The Holy Ghost who teaches the souls of men through our ministry has given four gifts to fashion divine minds; if found in "the church taught," *a fortiori* they ought to be found in "the Church teaching." Such gifts are illuminations of fixed character, and each has its subject matter: they are *Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, and Knowledge,* given either directly from Himself, or indirectly through others. It is written, "They shall hear my voice" (John x. 16); and again, "Who hears you hears Me" (Luke x. 16). A man may be an Orator without them, but never can be a Preacher.

III.—THE EFFICIENT CAUSE.

First in order comes the *Efficient Cause,* which fashions the true preacher. St. Thomas assigns three notes to it. (1) The preacher should be ripe in virtue. "No one ought to undertake the duty of preaching who has not first been chastened and perfected in virtue, as we read of Christ—"Jesus began to do and to teach." (*"Summa Theol.,"* III., xli., art. 3, ad 1 m.) (2) The preacher ought to be free from worldly cares and pursuits. "It was befitting Christ that He should have lived a life of poverty, because this befits the preacher's office, since the preachers of God's word ought to be free from this world's cares in order to be at leisure for their ministry." (III., xl., 3.) (3) He ought to cultivate the spirit of retirement. "Christ's conduct was for our instruction, and hence to give an example to preachers not to be seen constantly in public, our Lord withdrew Himself at times from the people." (III., xl., ad 3 m.) St. Thomas furthermore notes the

vast difference that is to be observed even among preachers. "Some are bound to preach, yet do not preach: these merit chastisement; as St. Paul observes, 'Woe unto me if I do not preach the Gospel.' (I. Cor. ix. 26.) Others are bound to preach and do so, yet of compulsion; these merit no reward although they escape chastisement. Others again are called by duty to preach and they preach willingly, yet look for earthly gains therefrom; such deserve a reward and escape punishment, yet lack superabundant glory. Lastly, there are some who, being bound by their state, preach zealously, while taking nothing in exchange; these escape punishment, heap up to themselves rewards, and obtain superabundant glory." (Commentary on I. Cor. ix., Lesson 3.)

This *First* or *Efficient Cause* has its corresponding gift: it is *Counsel,* or the knowledge of discretion, sought first of God and proximately of our elders. In homely language, a preacher has a great deal to learn, and must be trained. "Ask it of thine elders, and they will teach thee." (Deut. xxxii. 7.) This knowledge of discretion, or taking counsel, starts the preacher safely and keeps him honorably in his career. It teaches four things indispensable in an otherwise perilous ministry, viz., TO WHOM, WHEN, HOW, and WHAT he ought to discourse upon. This can only be the outcome of experience, and beginners must take such counsel of their elders. A word upon each.

1. TO WHOM. The preacher has a definite charge if he be entrusted with the care of souls: his duty in the foremost place is to his flock. He ought never to go beyond his appointed place, except in the case: (a) of deputation, as when called to filled the Lenten pulpit in a cathedral or principal church: (b) by virtue of special office, as the Canon Theologian, whose place it is to preach or else catechise daily in the mother church: (c) by exceptional invitation on some special occasion: (d) or by virtue of his state, as a missionary religious, yet he only speaks by request of the bishop or with his sanction. The roving commissions of mendicant preachers as spiritual free

lances were very properly extinguished at the time of the Council of Trent, as leading to abuses. No priest of whatever station may address a flock without the faculty of the chief pastor in the diocese. Furthermore, all going out into the highways and byways, open air preaching, lecturing upon dogmatic points in public halls, and the like, are points for the bishop alone to determine. Preaching is a sacramental action, to be exercised from the chair of truth, and to the flock.

2. WHEN. The Council of Trent has appointed the Gospels and Epistles to be expounded on all Sundays and certain holydays at the parish Mass. The Lord's Day is clearly the day for publishing His word to men, and is of obligation. Beyond these the Lenten and Advent seasons lend themselves admirably to special courses of sermons, or to missions: Triduums or Octaves may be undertaken at any time. A friendly exchange of pulpits is a boon for a congregation, for even the best speaker must at times pall upon his hearers. Discretion, born of counsel, keeps to the fore that saying of Ecclesiastes (iii. 7): "All things have their season; *there is a time to be silent,* and a time to speak." It requires as much tact to know when to curtail a sermon as when to preach one. Oh that preachers would think more of their victims, and less of themselves! In the presence of wet clothes and a damp church the sermon *ought to be* curtailed, and *may be* often omitted with advantage.

There is the sin of excess, and of defect: The notorious sinner by excess is the man who can not resist the opportunity of blazing away like a reckless sportsman. The presence of forty or sixty persons met for Rosary and Benediction on a week-night awakens a mental incontinency; those who come to pray are his lawful spoil. He sins against time *when:* another sins against time *how long.* The body of the sermon is exhausted, then comes "Lastly, my brethren," "One word more," and "In conclusion:" he hovers like a bird over his peroration, and can not settle. The sinner by defect is the man (1) who is always ill at ease in the pulpit and in a hurry to be gone:

he comes and stays and goes as if the next train were his last hope: he is rapid, and brief to the point of exasperation, which after all may be a kindly dispensation of a benevolent providence. (2) There is the timid man who is thinking "what will the choir say?" To preach for seven minutes that the choir may run riot over Rossini's "*Stabat Mater,*" or like extravaganza, is to sin by defect. Doctrine is the bread of life, and has no call to give way before cat-gut and human warblers however euphonious. (3) There is the moral coward who fears to offend the genteels met on an occasion by speaking plainly of the unpleasant truths which society ought to hear and does not mean to hear. Genteel subjects for genteel ears is cowardly Christianity, and a scandalous defect. "Verbum Dei non est alligatum." (II. Titus ii. 9.) Others fail in their duty, by trying to preach comfort only. Cardinal Newman observes: "Those who make comfort the great subject of their preaching seem to mistake the end of their ministry. Holiness is the great end. There must be a struggle and a toil here. Comfort is a cordial, but no one drinks cordials from morning to night." (A memorandum, September 16, 1824.) (4) There is the reckless preacher who neither asks counsel of his elders nor takes it when proffered, and consequently inflicts the most unsuitable themes judged from the standpoint of time. A preacher was once engaged to preach on St. Joseph's day in a church dedicated to the saint, and was given well to understand that it was the annual festival: he delivered an excellent sermon on "The Catholic Church and Education," which simply roused the ire of priest and people. Some men seem born without the bump of judgment as to the fitness of things and themes.

The third point which *Counsel* instills is HOW one ought to preach. Let the speech serve the occasion, the auditors, the position of the speaker, the theme, etc. We will speak more fully of this later on when dealing with the Art of Oratory.

Lastly, *Counsel* will teach us WHAT to preach. In this matter more than all others the advice of our elders should be sought. The section which treats

of the material cause will supply it. The present point is what *not* to preach about. Some topics ought never to invade the pulpit, such as political allusions, national sentiment, social topics, scandals or gossip of the day, etc. Far be it from us to witness the Catholic pulpit degraded to the level of many Dissenting platforms or Evangelical pulpits, a step down from the arena of dignity to the cock-pit of vulgarity, and be forced to hear discourses on such subjects as the following, which one sees publicly advertised: "Town Talk," "The Great Case," "Tit-Bits," "The Honeymoon," "In Life's Gloaming," "Bee-Workers," and many more. The rule which Christ left for preachers is "preach the gospel to every creature," and preachers should never fail to remember that it is the word which commends the speaker, and not the speaker who lends weight to the word. "The word which I have spoken to you is not mine own, but his who sent me." (John xiv. 24.) From want of humility and honesty in seeking counsel of their elders comes the occasional exhibition from younger members in the ministry, such as, "My brethren, I propose to address you this morning on the gospel of soap and water;" or, "We have all read in the newspapers," etc.

The *Efficient Cause*, aided by the light of *Counsel,* schools and makes the preacher an ambassador worthy of a divine function.

IV.—THE FINAL CAUSE.

The *Second Cause* is termed the *final* since it qualifies the end. "Finis habet rationem principii," says St. Thomas: "Our motive (end) is our principle of action;" consequently the *Final Cause* is the first in point of time and dignity, and needs but little explanation. In his Commentary on the Prophet Isaiah (chapter xli.) St. Thomas sets forth the motives for preaching: these are (1) the Spirit of Faith; (2) the Promptings of Zeal; (3) the Greatness of the Reward. "The spirit of Truth is the foundation of the whole spiritual edifice (I. II., lxvii., 3, ad 2), ever inclining us to the Truth (II. II., i., art. 1) and to resisting its contraries, viz., the spirit of unbelief and heresy." (II. II., ii., 3, ad 2, et xi. 1.) It is the spirit of the true preacher to spread the faith wherewith he is himself imbued, and to combat to the death its contraries. "We live in an age of apostasy," (Pius IX.) and have to combat heresy and unbelief, hence we must take for our own protective armor "the shield of faith" (Eph. vi. 16-23) and resist "strong in faith" (I. Peter v. 9). "This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith: who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth," etc. (I. John v. 4, 5). In speaking of the second note, which is Zeal, St. Thomas continues: "Howsoever it be considered, it comes from the intensity of love. The love of friendship seeks a friend's good, and the more intense it becomes the more it strives to repel all that is opposed to that good: and in this way a man is said to be zealous for God, when to the best of his ability he strives to remove whatever is contrary to God's will and honor" (I. II., xxvii., 4). As to the greatness of the reward no more need be said than to recall our Lord's own promises—"He that shall have wrought and taught shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 19). "They that shall have instructed others unto justice shall themselves shine like stars unto all eternity" (Dan. xii. 3). High aims born of high motives proceed from

Wisdom, and this first of gifts impels God's ministry to the right fulfilling of their supernatural ministry. It is human folly, the very antithesis of divine wisdom, which ruins the preacher's career and his destiny hereafter: the hankering after a bubble reputation instead of God's interests, and seeking fame instead of a heavenly prize for a heavenly calling. The salt of the earth has lost its savor when the preacher is leagued with the reporter.

V.—THE FORMAL CAUSE.

The *Third,* or *Formal Cause,* reveals the notes of the true Preacher: the third gift is *Understanding,* a wholly inward power conferring a just appreciation of the preacher's character and office. Let us again consult St. Thomas. "There are three things which the preacher of the divine word should possess: STABILITY, or SURETY, so as not to deflect from the truth, since he who errs makes the faith void. CLEARNESS OF EXPOSITION, that he may not teach obscurity: and PROFIT, that he may seek God's glory and not his own" (Commentary on Matt. v.). Describing the very person of the preacher the Saint observes in the same place—"The lamp is the doctrine of preaching, wherein the fervor of spirit should appear within, and the light of good example without." These notes touch the message of the ministry, but there are yet others which more particularly emphasize the messenger. Holy *Understanding* should also reveal (1) *the dignity of the office,* (2) *its usefulness for others,* (3) *the qualities requisite for its fitting discharge.* A word upon each.

(1) THE DIGNITY *of the office.* "We are ambassadors for Christ's sake" (II. Cor. v. 20). "A sower went out to sow his seed. . . . The seed is the word of God" (Luke viii. 5). With this reflection comes the practical resolve—to live up to our exalted calling. "How can they preach unless they be sent?" (Rom. x. 15).

(2) THE PROFIT *of preaching.* "Not by bread alone does man live, but by

every word which proceedeth from the mouth of God" (Matt. iv. 4). "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing from the word of Christ" (Rom. x. 17). The profit of the ministry lies in this, that it is the dispensing of God's word as the bread of life, from which the faith and moral life of the flock depend. "He whom God has sent speaks the word of God" (John iii. 34). On the preacher's personal worth, that is, upon his depth of spirituality, and upon his ministerial worth, in a great measure depends the vigor of life in his flock. Utility is simply the correlative of spirituality. Canon Oakley observes in his *Priests on the Mission* "the best of all sermons will be that which forms the most faithful transcript of an habitually religious mind." Our Lord, who is the model of preachers, says—"The mouth speaks from out the abundance of the heart" (Luke vi. 45). St. Bernard bids priests not to be canals but reservoirs of spirituality; that is, retaining fully their own measure of spirituality while imparting it. The same is true of a vigorous mind. "A well instructed pastor implies a well instructed flock, if he have the zeal of God's house." But unfortunately the lamentation of Jeremiah resounds yet in some quarters—"the little ones have craved for bread, and there was no one to break it to them" (Lam. iv. 4). With the decay of preaching from the sloth of pastors came the woeful ignorance and tepidity which engendered the great revolt of the sixteenth century, and history repeats itself.

(3) THE QUALIFICATIONS of a preacher in his own person which lend him personal worth are four, to wit—*Probity, Modesty, Benevolence,* and *Prudence.*

(*a*) PROBITY, or uprightness of character, bearing an unsullied reputation beyond reach of suspicion. "Let a man so esteem us as the ministers of Christ" (I. Cor. iv. 1). Wickedness and worldliness are its opposites, which speedily bridle the once unctuous tongue. "But do thou, O man of God, shun these things" (I. Tim. vi. 11). Probity of life is our outward comportment, living up to the exalted standard of doctrine which we preach.

"He that shall have done (as well as taught) shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 19), otherwise he is but as sounding brass.

(*b*) MODESTY, which is the flower of humility. Truly great preachers have all of them been the most modest and unassuming of men in the pulpit and out of it, wearing habitually the Modesty of Christ. Its opposite is painfully apparent in the forward manner of speech, loud-mouthed declamation, the consciousness of doing well. Posing of attitudes, the ever recurring *I* of egotism, the bumptious assumption of authority amounting to personal infallibility, speaking not as teachers and pleaders but as dictators, pandering to public taste, bidding for popularity, etc., are all of them, solecisms against good breeding and the simplicity of the Gospel. The preacher should take to heart St. Paul's commendation of himself, and model his conduct accordingly. "When I came to you, I came *not* in loftiness of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of Christ. For I judged not myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling: and my speech and my preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the showing of the spirit, and in power; that your faith might not stand on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (I. Cor. ii. 1-5).

(*c*) BENEVOLENCE or kindliness, which is indispensable for winning men. To address men well one must love them. The Gospel enjoins this kindly feeling, and it is always crowned with success. Asperity of manner or speech repels, but sweetness draws men. It was our Lord's gentleness and loving manner which drew the whole world after Him. To be an apostle one must love, and be patient, and gracious, and devoted. The true apostle is charity personified, ever eager to toil and endure, but with that charity which "is patient and kind" (I. Cor. xiii. 4). Tact and kindliness go a long way toward securing success. Harken to St. Paul: "I abuse not my power in the Gospel. . . . I became all things to all men that I might gain all" (I. Cor. ix. 18). The tone assumed by some speakers, notably in Mission

Sermons, is more calculated to repel than to draw sinners. St. Augustine's advice is golden: "With hatred of the sin, yet love of the sinner." Harshness of address begets discouragement, if not positive aversion. Our Lord said of Himself: "Him that cometh to me I will not cast out" (John vi. 37). Against the quality of benevolence is the disgusting practice of preaching *at* persons in public, instead of giving wholesome admonition in private. There is an instance on record of a preacher going so far in hot-headedness as to call down the curse of God upon a respectable congregation. This is simply deplorable; yet some preachers are so empty-headed as to boast of practically emptying a church: "whose glory is in their shame" (Phil. iii. 19).

(*d*) PRUDENCE, a quality of an even mind which can never be too highly extolled. The prudent speaker keeps that adage well in view—*in medio tutissimus ibis.* This is shown by holding the middle path between coldness or asperity and over familiarity of manner, between Calvinistic pessimism and Established Church latitudinarianism as to doctrine. The prudent man, like a skilful angler, knows from experience what will exactly suit the occasion. There are moral topics best left alone with certain classes. To instance this: it is imprudent to propose doubts against Catholic dogma or practices, since the objection will, to some minds, prove more cogent than the answer. Thoughts of unbelief never foster true belief. It is imprudent to state how far one can go in violating a command or a precept without sinning mortally: it is more imprudent to allude to indelicate subjects before the young: yet common sense is not so common as it should be. This same quality of prudence will whisper inwardly and admonish when a subject or its treatment is not congenial with the auditory, and will promptly remedy the defect: this is simply *tact.* "Give us, O Holy Spirit, to have in all things of our ministry a ripe understanding."

VI.—THE MATERIAL CAUSE.

The *fourth cause* is the MATERIAL; it is sound doctrine as the basis of sound teaching. He who would teach others must himself be learned. "To the learned and unlearned I am a debtor" (Rom. i. 14). Learning is of two classes, natural and supernatural. Supernatural knowledge is objective wisdom, and comes of the gift of *Wisdom* poured by the Holy Ghost into the mind to supply the lack of natural intuition, or else uplifting the mind to grasp truths of a higher order. The knowledge of God in Himself is the direct object of wisdom, begotten of an infused habit or quality in him who possesses it. The light begets the science, and this infused knowledge is either the fruit of predilection, or won by a life of prayer joined to purity of heart. Happy is the man who is thus "taught of God" as the apostles were, who becomes in his day the *tuba Domini,* the trumpet or mouthpiece of the Spirit, for such knowledge supplies the rest. Examples of this are to be seen in the Lord's Apostles, Doctors of the Church; Apostles of nations, and deeply spiritual souls, such as the Curé d'Ars. When God supplies such wisdom, then a divine unction is palpable on the lips, for the whole man is moved by the Spirit. The preacher's deepest prayer should be for *Wisdom* as a gift, since without it he fails to rise to the full perfection of his calling.

Returning again to the lower or natural order, sacred science is also the outcome of a gift which is termed *Knowledge.* We acquire our store of science in the schools. No one has figured conspicuously in the Church as a preacher who had not previously acquitted himself well in the schools, for the terms Doctor and Preacher are synonymous. The discipline of study does not end with the scholastic curriculum; we are therein taught *how* to study, to fashion and wield our weapons; the pursuit of knowledge as a basis of preaching is the work of a lifetime. Truly great masters of Oratory preach seldom, but study unremittingly. The matter of Sacred Oratory is

the whole body of revelation directly, and many branches of human knowledge indirectly. Under the CORPUS PREDICABILIUM may be comprised:

1. *The Sacred Scriptures.*
2. *Sums of Apologetics.*
3. *Moral Theology.*
4. *Dogmatic Theology.*
5. *Ascetical Theology.*
6. *Christian Ethics.*

Other sciences give precision of knowledge, and may only be used by way of confirmation.

I. THE SACRED SCRIPTURES. Since the subject of Sacred Oratory is God in His dealings with men, and man in relation to God, we have to study as matter for sermons both Testaments, and these both separately and relatively. Each has its distinct aim and purpose: then again the Old prefigures or foretells the New, while the New fulfils the Old. "Except you eat this book you can not instruct the children of Israel" (Jerome on Ezechiel).

THE OLD TESTAMENT. This should, speaking generally, be used as a text-book of definite facts and sayings which influence man's belief and conduct. A general knowledge is indispensable as affording mighty scope and range. Its matter may be comprised more succinctly under four headings as a preacher's manual.

1. *Dogmatic Facts:* as in Genesis and Exodus.
2. *Moral Precepts:* Deuteronomy, Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom.
3. *Affective Piety:* Psalms and Canticle.
4. *Prophetic Sayings:* chiefly Jeremiah and Isaiah.

A brief word of explanation upon each.

1. DOGMATIC FACTS. These comprise the rise of man, origin of the universe, outlines of primitive history, the change in man's state owing to the fall. An intelligent reading aided by a Commentary is requisite as the groundwork. A blunder in any such matter would shatter the finest dis-

course, and it must be borne in mind that the English public is well posted up in Biblical literature. Genesis and Exodus should be on the preacher's finger-tips as to accuracy.

2. Moral Precepts, as influencing justification, are chiefly laid down in Wisdom, Ecclesiastes, and Ecclesiasticus. A moral counsel comes home to the people when couched in the inspired words much more than when given in the common currency of speech. The divine word has a sacramental power. The devout author of the Imitation of Christ has wisely observed: "The most solid preacher is the man who to prove or illustrate, can aptly apply the Scriptures," and this is equally true of the language employed.

3. Affective Piety, which is the language of the heart, is heard at its best in the Psalms. The soul's outpourings of repentance, joy, gratitude, praise, entreaty, and the like, can never be voiced better than in the symphonies of the Holy Ghost, "Who spoke through the prophets:" for instance, the *Jubilate Deo omnis terra, In te Domine speravi, Miserere mei Deus, Cum invocarem exaudivit me Deus,* etc. The Psalm cxviii. contains the whole theology of the spiritual life, and Blessed Albert Magnus has drawn it out as such at great length: at the same time it is full of themes for sermons.

4. Prophetic Utterances. To grasp the true idea of Christ one has to seek Him in the prophets. Isaiah and Jeremiah give the motives of His coming, the manner and time of His birth (Daniel) and death, His passion, inner sorrows, and divine mission. Our Lord appealed to the testimony which Moses bore to Him. The other prophets deal with minor points, but from the standpoint of material eloquence Isaiah and Jeremiah are sufficient. The chief types of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, and of the Church, should all be made familiar, as the transition from figure to personality in Oratory is most graceful and convincing, *e. g.*, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John iii. 14).

The Old Testament in its entirety can be used as a boundless field for gleaning examples of wholesome moral points. The preacher has constantly to lay stress on God's Justice in visiting sin, Mercy in condoning offenses, Power in performing mighty works, etc., all of which are profusely illustrated in Holy Writ. Sometimes a name may be substituted for a deed, and the list of moral heroes as well as the delinquents can be found in the same pages. Abel (innocence), Enoch (pleasing unto God), Noah (just), Abraham (faithful), Moses (meek), Jesus (chaste), David (sorrowing), etc. Of all books in the Old Testament the most profitable to commit to memory is the Latin version of the Psalms, since every sentiment of the soul before God is to be found in them.

The New Testament is, as a whole, vastly more important in itself and profitable as a study with a view to preaching. Like the Old, it may be considered as comprising:

1. *Dogmatic Truths,* of deed or word.
2. *Moral Precepts* and examples.
3. *Ascetical Counsels.*
4. *Prophecy Fulfilled.*

It may be divided into two classes of books, the historical and ethical. To the first class belong the Gospels with the Acts, to the latter the Epistles.

1. Dogmatic Truths. The basis of belief lies in the Holy Gospels: they are the written deposits of Faith, of which Theology is the scientific form. The Nature of God, the Trinity in Unity, Incarnation, Redemption, Judgment, Means of Salvation, Evangelical Counsels, Nature and Mission of the Church, etc., are therein taught authoritatively. The Sacred Books are of the weightiest import to the preacher, and should be ever on his lips, for they are a divine word, whereas the science of theology apart from them is purely human. Nor ought that other fount of authority—"the unwritten word," or Tradition—be overlooked.

2. Moral Precepts: these are to be found abundantly in our Lord's

words, notably in the parables, nor could nobler examples be set before the people than those so beautifully drawn in the Gospels.

3. Ascetical Counsels, as of Poverty, Chastity, Obedience, Self-deniai, Prayer, pursuit of Perfection, etc., are conveyed in the Sermons on the Mount, and at the Last Supper, and in the calling of the Apostles, or Christ's invitation to follow after Himself.

4. Prophecy Fulfilled. This is readiest grasped by reading our Lord's Life through the aid of a Commentator, who at each stage recalls the clear foretelling, and accentuates its literal fulfilment. Christ appealed to it: *e. g.*, "This day is this word fulfilled in me" (Luke iv. 21). This concludes the first fount of the *Corpus predicabilium,* viz., the Sacred Scriptures of either Testament, at once the first, and fullest, and weightiest. The application of the Epistles we relegate to Ethics.

The second fount of preaching material should be looked for in Sums of Apologetics. The model Apologist is St. Justin Martyr: Origen against Celsus is the earliest: most of the early Fathers, and some of the later, are purely Apologists. The true Christian Apology may be defined as "a reasonable account of our faith:" on the other hand, a polemist is one who exposes error to confute it. St. Athanasius against the Arians uses the polemic style. There are many useful modern Apologists, notably such as have wielded the pen in defense of Revelation, the Divinity of our Lord, the Mission of the Church.*

The third, fourth, and fifth founts are Theology according to its branches of Dogmatic, Moral, and Ascetical. The first, while securing immunity from error in the use of terminology, is rarely of service to the preacher, since the realm of dogma, especially of the Scholastics, is quite beyond the vulgar grasp. To the priest charged with the burden of a weekly sermon, the best possible field of matter is the *Prima Secundae* and *Secunda Secundae* of St. Thomas' *Summa Theologica;* most editions give

* Loca Theologica, Propaideutica, Défenses, Replies.

the places to be consulted for the year's Epistles and Gospels. What could be more profitable or entertaining than the nature of virtue and sin? An excellent Retreat for men can be given out of the Virtue of Religion and the Cardinal Virtues. The Catechism of the Council of Trent has a good synopsis of sermons upon all the useful topics, referring the preacher to their exposition in the body of the work. Since the aim of preaching is to make men better Christians, the preacher ought to set aside the subtleties and moot points of the schools, and go in for popularizing Moral Theology. Open the General Index to the *Summa* and the whole matter on any given subject lies before one in epitome: turn to the texts indicated and one has proof of argument and authority even more than sufficient. The art will then lie in popularizing the text, that is, in bringing it home to minds less versed in it than his own, for the speaker must be their brain. Ascetical Theology is of some use, slight indeed, in preparing matter for Conferences, or for Retreats: while storing the mind, it is singularly unpractical for the preacher, and ought to fall directly under the Confessor's domain. Such are the writings of St. Francis de Sales, Schram, Sa, Scaramelli, St. Alphonsus, and others who deal with the inner life.

LASTLY, we have to grasp and present *Christian Ethics* to the people. The higher school is Apostolic, the Epistles of St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, St. James, St. Barnabas: the lower school is the philosophical Treatise of Ethics usually read in the schools.

It is useful to show how the natural law written in men's hearts, or in the laws of society, bears out the revealed law as to men's conduct individually and socially. Social questions have to be dealt with, the rights of parents and rulers, Education according to conscience, the human proclivities from atavism, and a hundred more moral and burning questions of the day, are all set forth to hand; the sower has but to scatter the seed.

This concludes our first part, which deals only with the nature and causes of Sacred Oratory.

TAKING NOTES. A most profitable work, if rightly done. (1) Choose some convenient method. (2) Keep to that one method. (3) Keep up the practice of note taking.

PLAN. Have three books: One for plans of sermons for Sundays and festivals; another with plans of moral subjects apart, and leave space for about four plans on each topic; let the third book serve as a repository of extracts to be used as occasion serves. This third book ought to be divided into two sections, each arranged alphabetically, the first containing *sayings, e. g.,* extracts from Holy Scriptures, Spiritual writers, Holy Fathers, or passages of note generally; the second should be devoted to anecdotes and illustrations. Read with a view to compiling matter for sermons. Let the notes be short, examples curtailed, and the source set down as well for after reference.

Second Part.

THE PRACTICAL ART OF PREACHING.

"The surest test of an Orator is to be reputed as such by public opinion." (Cicero.)

The complete scheme of practical preaching can be comprised under a dozen headings.

1. The Various Classes of Oratory.
2. Analysis of a Discourse.
3. Invention and Disposition of Arguments.
4. Standard Qualities of a Sermon.
5. Expression or Language.
6. The Use of Tropes and Figures.
7. Written and Extempore Sermons.
8. Delivery and Gesture.
9. Homilies, Prones, Conferences.
10. Dogmatic and Moral Discourses.
11. Panegyrics and Catechizing.
12. Missions and Retreats.

I.—THE VARIOUS CLASSES OF ORATORY.

Five such classes are in the main recognized by pulpit orators. First comes the Deliberative, whose sole aim is to convince by weight of studied argument: this kind is reserved for the "set sermon," and needs to be elaborately worked up. If its burden be the solid exposition of some truth, one has to aim at concentration of ideas with precision of expression, while guarding against seeming to degenerate into a scholastic exercise. Written dissertations hot

from the schools will not do as sermons: they must be worked up so as to reach the heart as well as the mind.

Of Controversy. Should the matter in hand be controversial, either because of the subject itself, or in reply, it is always wisest to adopt the expository method, and adhere to the Apologetic rather than the Polemic form. Little good, if any, comes of slashing attack, biting retort, or ridicule; if a weak position has to be exposed let it be done with due consideration for an opponent, if our aim be to win and not slay. The opponent of to-day in good faith may be our brother in arms in God's appointed time. Never allude to or presume bad faith: even an unguarded expression in a sermon has the effect of thinning the offertory on special occasions. The fisher of men must not wilfully scare the souls whom God's providence draws within Catholic walls: the mildest word against such a proceeding is this—it defeats its own end. Where *persuasion* is the end in view the preacher must "exhort in sound doctrine," and hence mean what he says and say openly what he means, thus imparting his own deep convictions. The Deliberative method marks the solid preacher, and is the highest form of pulpit eloquence.

Secondly, there is the Demonstrative method of preaching, which deals less with scientific formularies of truth, and relies more on examples and homely illustrations to enforce moralities. Our Lord's teaching in parables is an example of this, clothing the doctrine with the garb of story, as in the Prodigal Son's return, He preaches repentance.

The Third Class is known as the Homiletic, and consists in an exposition of the gospel of the day. There is the strictly Homiletic form, in which each member of the gospel is expounded according to Scriptural exegesis: there is also the less rigid form which deals with but one or a few points in the gospel, and forms the familiar Sunday Prone. The best examples of Homilists are St. Augustine, St. Gregory, St. Bede, St. Jerome, St. Thomas,* in their expositions of the gospels; it is advisable to consult the best Commentators

*The Catena Aurea and Sermons.

of the present day as well, so as to secure the true literal sense, since the Holy Fathers sometimes busy themselves only with the mystic interpretation.

A FOURTH method is called the COMPOSITE, which is simply a happy blending of the three preceding, but there is a danger of the speaker identifying himself with his style and becoming "mixed." It is the most trying form for the public patience and understanding, and generally proves tedious, while to the tyro it is a veritable pitfall.

A FIFTH method is advocated under the title of the SCHOLASTIC or rigidly doctrinal, such as a sermon befitting Trinity Sunday or a dogmatic Course of Sermons, but practically it resolves itself into the DELIBERATIVE. An offshoot of this is the CATECHETICAL method, of which we shall speak in due course. In order to secure success it will be of great moment for the preacher to recognize his own best form and to cultivate it, to weigh beforehand the style adapted to the occasion and subject and auditory, since an error herein is disastrous in its issue.

II.—ANALYSIS OF A DISCOURSE.

Every sermon is made up of the MATTER, the END, and the PROPOSITION.

1. The MATTER should be some definite doctrine neither indulging in platitudes, novelties, nor too far-reaching scope. This matter is then set forth by a threefold class of argument, either PROVING it from undoubted sources, such as authority or reason; or ILLUSTRATING it so as to confirm the truth, by examples from Holy Writ; or MOVING to excite the auditory to its ready acceptance. A true orator can sway the passions as well as the minds of men, and soothe as well as stir. This is the triple appeal to the mind, the imagination, and the passions.

2. The END, or what we propose to achieve in our address. This will depend upon the matter. A dogmatic sermon will have for its end the simple exposition of doctrine for conviction's sake. A moral discourse has no such aim: it

is absurd to dogmatize over moralities which are already accepted by the conscience. The end in view is to secure amendment of life, to send the people away better on this point, and all must lead up to this issue, using the Demonstrative method. An example to the point would be a sermon on the Pharisee and Publican, the Unjust Steward, the Ten Virgins. "*In cauda medicina!*"

3. The PROPOSITION regards the way of treating the subject in hand. It must be GRAVE and FITTING. Its gravity makes it worthy of being listened to, and excludes frivolity and shallowness: its fittingness implies that it suits the speaker, whether a prelate, simple priest, or missioner; fitting those addressed, as adults, sinners, members of a Guild, or nuns; lastly, fitting the season, the place, the occasion. These three points make a homogeneous whole.

THE TEXT. Next the preacher turns to his text, which either the gospel of the day or his common sense will suggest. It is vulgar to court singularity in the choice of a text. A text however must be chosen, and ought to be chosen with one of three views. (1) As a theme of exposition, a thought to be developed, a point to be enforced. (2) It may be made quite subservient, and rank only as a point of departure: St. Thomas does this occasionally in the Summa Theologica, as an opening to an article. (3) It may rank as the point of attainment, the whole sermon leading the people up gradually to its fulfilment. It is advisable not to run away from it altogether, but to weave it skilfully through the narrative. The next thing to be thought of is to secure the Plan.

THE PLAN can be disposed of under these brief considerations.

1. NEED OF: to secure precision of matter as well as clearness of thought, starting and ending at given points: its absence brings rambling ideas, vagueness of thought and expression, with no definite point or fruit as issue.

2. BENEFIT OF: it aids the preacher's memory in delivery, and the listener's, who can carry away something definite.

3. VARIETY OF: avoid the everlasting sameness, like the one, two, three of

chimes. Three points are conventional but not essential, two will do, and one well handled is enough; but there must always be one leading thought or chief point. Variety gives pleasure, like the varied time in a musical composition, especially when a flock hears the same voice all the year round. For example, let us consider variety on a common topic, such as the Holy Rosary. One plan will suggest the blending of mental with vocal prayer, another will put forward the position held by Mary in the Mysteries, a third deals with our Lord's thoughts or actions, a fourth scheme considers the Rosary as a most popular form of devotion, another sees in it the most richly endowed Confraternity as to Indulgences, while a final may regard it historically as the preservative of faith in penal times, and the companion of saintliness. It is with sermons as with meat served up; the variety of the dressing lends appetite and relish. Here we have six leading themes, or sermons, complete in one solid point. If we attempt to group them, one must lead and the other be subordinate, in which case the less prominent idea should precede and lead up to the greater. Some of the ideas will work out well side by side, others certainly will not. It is an easy matter to work up a capital sermon out of any one of the above points, difficult to harmonize two, and hopeless to work off three, for such would be preposterous in association and length. Much skill is shown in knowing what to leave unsaid.

Another pleasing variety is secured by transition, passing from the type to the reality, observing the same points, *e. g.,* the Manna and the Holy Eucharist, (1) descending from heaven, (2) giving delight, (3) sustaining life in the wilderness. Or we may keep within one point, as the raising up of the brazen serpent to save from death, and the upraising of Christ upon the cross. Or we may invert the order and give the reality first, and then develop it from its prototype, *e. g.,* "a greater than Elias is here."

4. CONSISTENCY OF: shown in the fair distribution of the parts in the plan, not unduly dwelling upon one at the expense of the rest, like a quaver flanked

by two minims. Some sermons resemble tadpoles, they are mostly head, and then fall away.

5. METHOD OF: this will depend wholly upon the kind of discourse, whether oration, prone, or homily. A pure homily has no points at all; it is a running comment upon the text of the gospel, as shall be shown in its due place.

6. FAULT OF: *ars artis est celare artem*, so let the plan not be too apparent, especially where the points admit of subdivision; the skeleton needs to be well clothed, otherwise it appears a starveling.

THE PARTS OF A DISCOURSE.—After the Text and the Plan come the Parts of a Discourse.

The integral parts of a complete discourse are five, in the following order of development.

THE EXORDIUM or opening speech, to prepare the hearers for what is to come. St. Augustine, in his work upon "Christian Doctrine" (book iv., chap. iv.), assigns three aims to the Exordium, viz., to make the listener well disposed, attentive, and docile. It may be SIMPLE, that is unpretentious; or INSINUATING, courting a hearing, as the opening of Shakespeare's Oration in the mouth of Mark Antony over Cesar's body; or POMPOUS, as in the Funeral Orations of Bossuet and Massillon; or VEHEMENT, as in Cicero's Oration against Catiline or the Philippics of Demosthenes; TEMPERATE, or JUDICIOUS; or lastly ABRUPT, passing in few pregnant passages to the subject in hand.

The body of the discourse comprises the PROPOSITION fairly exposed in the first point, CONFIRMATION in the second, and its full ARGUMENTATION (or REFUTATION of the contrary) in the third. In a purely scriptural address these would be the *Literal* sense, the *Mystic,* and the *Moral.*

The final section is the PERORATION, or winding up, and this should be well studied, for in its application lies the gist of a sermon. St. Alphonsus assigns three portions—the *Epilogue, Morality,* and *Invitation:* these are better hit off as RECAPITULATION of the general argument, PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS drawn, and FINAL EXHORTATION. In sermons known as "In Memoriam," or

"Month's Mind," or on the funeral occasion, the Peroration may gracefully take the "Valedictory" form; the peroration of then Provost Manning's sermon upon Cardinal Wiseman is a gem of its kind.

III.—INVENTION AND DISPOSITION OF ARGUMENTS.

INVENTION measures out the various classes of arguments employed, while DISPOSITION assigns their place in the composition of a sermon. Take, by way of illustration of INVENTION, a sermon on our Lord's Divinity, a mystery calmly explained away by some churchmen in high places. With the Sacred Scriptures and Theology or LOCA THEOLOGICA to hand, one can easily construct half a dozen sermons on the subject. The miracle of the Resurrection alone is sufficient for the purpose, as (1) Foretold, (2) Fulfilled, (3) By Christ Alone: or (1) The Divine Character of the Act, (2) Its Divine Mode of Accomplishment, (3) Its Divine Assurance.

The preacher may quit INTRINSIC evidences if he list, and appeal only to EXTRINSIC, such as (1) The Placing of Guards to Prevent its Fulfilment by False Declaration, (2) The Visible Presence of Christ seen and touched, (3) The Manifold Appearances.

Another plan of broader scope will be to show (1) God's Attributes Incommunicable to Creatures, such as Omniscience and Omnipotence. (2) Christ exhibiting the same.

Arguments may be either INTRINSIC, drawn from the subject, or EXTRINSIC, as testimonies from without, according to the LOCI employed. There can be but three sources of argument *ab intrinseco.* (1) Those found *within the subject* as belonging to its nature, *e. g.,* the Definition, Genus, Species, Form, Enumeration of integral parts, Kindred Terms, and Notation, or what is implied in a name.

2. Formalities not existing IN THE NATURE, although allied WITH THE NATURE: *e. g.,* Cause, Effect, Antecedents, Consequences, Adjuncts.

3. COMPARATIVE QUALITIES, which form no part of the subject in itself, but only as compared with others, *e. g.,* Relation, Likeness, Contraries, or any other points of comparison. One of these by itself will furnish a solid basis of argument, as being deduced from the same subject directly or indirectly, but there is a sliding scale in descending degree between the three classes enumerated.

EXTRINSIC sources are simply testimonies from without, and may be either divine or human, such as God's testimony of miracles, or men's witness to holiness of life. Intrinsic LOCI should always be preferred in selecting arguments for a discourse. Sometimes these are beyond the common grasp of the people, in which case the extrinsic are to be made more of. In a panegyric upon a Doctor of the church, *e. g.,* St. Thomas of Aquin, the extrinsic will carry greater weight of evidence and conviction if the preacher chooses to dwell upon the encomiums passed upon the Doctor by Sovereign Pontiffs, Councils, and the learned generally, thus showing the rank held by the subject through successive ages of history.

OF REFUTATION. It may fall out that the preacher's theme is not the building up of a line of proof, but rather the confutation of unsound doctrine, as of heresy, or that the sophism of "non causa ut causa" is hurled against the Church; as, for example, the laxity of faith or morals in a Catholic country, a scandal in times past or present, or an abuse of any kind, imputing these evils to Catholicism. There are more ways than one of putting down the like, or of confuting falsehood in doctrine or assertion. Three courses are open: DENIAL, DISTINCTION, or RETORT. In confuting errors of doctrine, such as "baptism does not confer spiritual regeneration, and is but a sign of faith," or—"sin is not taken away by Christ's death, but simply not imputed" (the errors of Baptists and Lutherans), the course of DENIAL must be followed. Denial, like every other negative, does not admit of proof positive, conse-

quently it must be upheld by substantial proof of the opposite. A maxim must be stripped of its false sense, and clothed with the true. St. Thomas' precept on the point ought to be strictly applied. "Whoever attempts to prove a mystery by natural reason inflicts a double wrong upon the faith, both by lowering the faith, and against its availableness for drawing others to the faith. Truths of faith are to be upheld by authorities in arguing with such as admit the like authorities; with others it suffices to show that there is no impossibility in the teachings of faith." Hence by denial is not meant merely flat contradiction, but the denial reasonably grounded on the clear evidence of the opposite. Or let us consider a purely spiritual duty neglected for frivolous excuses, the duty of prayer. One does not pray because ignorant of its worth, or necessity, or delights of heavenly conversation. Another neglects prayer, being disheartened at the constant current of distractions. A third fails to pray because prayer is not answered as he wants, and at his own convenience. The hollowness of such excuses must be set forth, and, after explaining the true aspects of prayer, the conclusion drawn must be denied, at the same time showing its unsoundness. The best form of substantiating denial of fact is to use the "post hoc sed non propter hoc" argument.

The second course is to use DISTINCTION: this scholastic method commends itself in dealing with propositions which admit of a true and false interpretation, such as the "Our Advocate with the Father." The speaker's main endeavor should be to sift the chaff from the wheat. The same course must be employed in explaining points of religion misinterpreted by those outside the Church, such as Indulgences, Veneration of Relics, Invocation of Our Lady, etc.

The third and least dignified process is the RETORT polite: but *tu quoque* is a poor weapon and needs very gentlemanly handling. "Abuses there are, I admit, but our religion is not their cause. If we look at members of your own denomination, similar foibles are to be seen, yet no reasonable man sets down your faith as their cause." "Have we no evidences of harsh persecu-

tion at the hands of Protestants here in England, while proclaiming liberty of private judgment?" Or, to quote Cardinal Newman: "Thank God, we have kept no record of Protestant scandals"—a scathing rebuke. Or again: "You claim the right of private judgment, and discard the shepherd to whom Christ said, 'Feed my sheep, feed my lambs.'" I retort: "Your position is scriptural, but unsound: 'All we, like sheep, have gone astray; each one has turned aside into his own path.'"

DISPOSITION follows in the wake of INVENTION and deals with the sequel of arguments used as grounds of proof. Some proofs are more telling in themselves, others more obvious to the listener; judgment will dictate to which the greater prominence should be given. The Logical order should be observed, and that in two ways. (1) By opening out with the more taking argument, followed by the more solid; by preferring the intrinsic to the extrinsic ground of proof: (2) by following the natural sequel of reasoning as far as possible, as in the Sorites form of argument. "Virtue is a great and good thing: what is both great and good uplifts a man: what uplifts perfects: we ought to covet whatever perfects us as men: then should we strive to be virtuous, and we shall be both great and good." Ideas should succeed one another (1) by natural connection, (2) by easy sequence, (3) by proceeding from what is of less to what is of greater import: the evils to be guarded against are, inconsequence of sequel, and introduction of matters of little moment to the point. Again, argument should precede illustration as by point of anecdote. A right use of DISPOSITION serves to secure conviction; its wrong use weakens the weapons of INVENTION.

IV.—STANDARD QUALITIES.

The standard qualities of a sterling honest sermon are three—it should be POPULAR, PLAIN, STIRRING.

A popular preacher is one who can draw and hold an audience. St. Augustine says that the listener needs to be pleased in order to keep him. Such POPULARITY of sermons is secured by the theme chosen, the language in which it is presented, and the duration of the discourse. A subject need not be selected because it is popular, since unpalatable truths have to be preached, but the art lies in making the same palatable. Some minds seem wedded to prosaic themes, and such a reputation wrecks popularity.* Again, the style employed secures popularity, and the most taking topic can be butchered. Thirdly, the sermon should be short, as a rule; all the sermons of the Holy Fathers are brief. A long winded man can never be a popular speaker; his reputation secures absence. Given a pleasing presence, good matter, finished style, and decent length, a preacher is assured of popularity.

The sermon should be PLAIN SPEECH, using the various forms of illustration, such as *Metaphors, Parables, Similes*, etc., and shunning pedantry.

It is pedantic to indulge in scientific terms, or in archaic forms of speech, or in words of portentous length, of foreign coinage, of dubious meaning.

PASTORAL SERMONS to country people should, above all qualities, be plain, bringing down the great truths to the level of the rustic mind, shunning argument, copiously illustrating, frequently repeating, enlivening by story.

THE POWER OF ANECDOTE. A well told story with a telling point is invaluable in a mission sermon, and useful in most discourses of a moral nature. Sermons to children and simple folk require illustration, but the anecdote must be well put. There are three classes of anecdote: (1) PURELY SACRED,

* "A dry sermon can never be a good one."—*Blair.*

such as those drawn from Holy Scripture or the lives of the saints; (2) DOMESTIC, drawn from daily life or a priest's experience; (3) PROFANE, culled from history. In the narration the whole tone of voice and manner should be changed to secure emphasis: a homely conversational tone is best. The Holy Fathers occasionally quoted epigrams and the poets, but only such extracts as befitted the theme. A story marred in the way of telling is rather a blot than an ornament.

A popular sermon needs, lastly, to be STIRRING. Animation may come from the preacher's fund of spirituality; it is then termed unction. Sermons by saints were not always clever, seldom polished, but always unctuous, and so they drew men by this divine influence.* A sermon from the heart must be full of unction: it does not imply noise or vehemence, but fervor: quiet preachers are the most unctuous, as a rule. But there is the human animation likewise, which comes of conviction and passion. The Greeks distinguished two classes of passion: PATHOS, the vehement passion to stir, the language of storm, and ETHOS, the mild, subtle, winning emotion. Passion fills a discourse with a living soul. Bossuet shone in the use of *Pathos,* Massillon in *Ethos.* Orators have also availed themselves of the power of wit and humor, appealing to the risible as well as to the emotional faculties. The medieval preachers frequently indulged in pleasant sallies, but as satire upon prevailing follies of fashion; nor is the practice unheard of in our own days. It is a dangerous expedient, unless well handled, and may lower where it seeks to elevate.† Good humor is infectious; a skilful speaker can keep his audience well in hand by a timely sally of wit, and when pathetic does not prolong the agony.

* The Venerable Curé d'Ars and B. Grignon de Montfort.

† See Disraeli's *Curiosities of Literature,* "Jocular Preachers."

V.—EXPRESSION, OR LANGUAGE.

LANGUAGE is the medium through which the speaker communicates his thoughts and sentiments. As the painter, conceiving some lofty ideal and having all the cunning of his art to execute, would fail of success by neglect of employing the best medium of pigments, so the orator who neglects language fails in the material portion of his work. EXPRESSION comprises ELEGANCE, COMPOSITION, and DIGNITY. Elegance comprises TONE and PURITY. (*a.*) TONE regards the *elevation* of style, of which there are three degrees—the FAMILIAR, or CONVERSATIONAL; the MIDDLE, or ELEGANT; and the SUBLIME. (*b.*) PURITY regards the elements of style employed in the written or spoken address. First of these qualities denoting purity is SIMPLICITY—simplicity of terms employed and of structure of the composition; and first a word as to simplicity of terms. Our language is sprung from three sources: the Saxon proper to the soil; Norman French, which has become naturalized by eight centuries of usage, and Latin, which remains an alien and appeals to the learned few. Simplicity of style demands the use of Saxon or Norman French words, the simplest, everyday terms of our common speech; latinisms are not to be employed, as being above the common grasp. Here is a specimen of what not to say: "The rustic intelligence can not comprehend the scintillation of stellar luminaries nor the solar orbit." Here is the same in simple English: "The peasant's mind can not grasp the twinkling of the stars nor the sun's rounds in the sky." Simple words strung together form pure sentences. The English Bible is a classic in this sense. All abstruse terms must be shunned, and latinisms or graecisms eschewed. Purity must pervade the structure of sentences, of clauses inserted, and qualifying statements: the enemy of simplicity herein is ambiguity, by overloading the phrase with qualifications, or clash of two negatives. "I will not hesitate to say that the present spirit of enterprise is not likely to abate."

The second note of purity is CLEARNESS, to the exclusion of obscurity or vagueness. Words susceptible of various meanings should be so hedged as to exclude all senses but the one intended. The use of Contrast serves to establish clearness. Periods which sound well as delivered are often found to be faulty when analyzed. Mixed metaphors are fatal to clearness: putting in opposition things which are contraries strip the context of all right sense, *e. g.*, "There are footprints on the sands of time which the hand of man has not effected."

The third note is PICTURESQUENESS. The art of word painting, describing scenes with local coloring, or with details of action and emotion, serves not merely to adorn, but to elucidate a subject, and impress it deeply upon the soul, forming the connecting link between the intellectual and emotional faculties. A sermon on the Crucifixion lends itself admirably to this.

COMPOSITION, which is the second feature of EXPRESSION, supplies rules for the formation of individual sentences according to period, and order, and connection: but this belongs strictly to rhetoric and not to practical oratory.

The third component part of EXPRESSION we have termed DIGNITY, and consists in the proper application of tropes and figures of speech, which requires separate consideration.

VI.—THE USE OF TROPES AND FIGURES.

FIGURE is the ornament of language. When a speaker conceives his subject strongly, then his fervid imagination clothes his language with the warmth of imagery. Such figures must flow naturally from the flush of passion or imagination, and from the character of the subject in hand. It is idle to force them; they must be the free flow of fancy; nor will every topic lend itself to them. Like every other ornament, Imagery must not be too labored, nor too conspicuous, nor superabundant. Such faults rob it of its charm and beget aversion or weariness; what is meant to delight oppresses. The jackdaw

strutting with a borrowed peacock's glory-spread is the image of the speaker who plunders figures which his own unimaginative mind can not spontaneously beget. Figures are of a twofold kind, OF SPEECH and OF THOUGHT: the first is termed a TROPE, the second a FIGURE: in the first the word is changed from its natural sense to a symbolical use, as "light on darkness pour," for "instruct our ignorance"; in the second the true meaning is preserved, but the figure lies in the turn of the thought, as when Dryden compares the Catholic Church to the milk-white hind.

USE OF FIGURES 1. They extend the power of language, since figure can hit off accurately what word can not. Thought has its shades of color, which the bare expression can not convey.

2. Figure elevates style beyond commonplaces. Nobler sentiments call for nobler utterance: figurative speech clothes them in splendid apparel as befits their rank. "Care haunts: hunger stalks through the land."

3. The use of figure delights the listener with a dual pleasure otherwise lost, and in no other wise to be had. It is pleasant to linger over a melody by itself, but add to it the concerted harmonies, and the pleasure is intensified. Trope and speech are similarly wedded, since every trope is founded upon a true or fanciful analogy between things. "Like some frail blossom on a slender stem, she drooped: she sickened not, but faded from the earth, like summer's rose plucked by some hidden hand." How vastly superior in tone and pleasure is this sentence, to the same stripped of ornament: "She died of anemia, very young." "Like some silver-laden shower, dropt from heaven hour by hour, sound the bells of Venice on the sea."

4. Figures serve to give a clearer insight into the main thought, the accessory idea supplementing the leading: they impress thoughts indelibly. "A star shall arise from Jacob." "Benjamin is a ravening wolf, Juda a lion's whelp." "As the hart pants for the running brook, so does my soul yearn for thee, my God."

CLASSES OF FIGURES. 1. METONYMY. This first class is founded on primary

relations, such as cause to effect, container to the contained, sign to the thing signified, a passion for its object, a name for a work. Substituting cause for effect, or the contrary, yields commonest tropes of speech, such as, "Men loved him for the *grace* that was in him," meaning his virtues, the outcome of grace; "You will bring my *gray hairs* in sorrow to the tomb," meaning old age. "He wields not the *sword* in vain," the symbol of authority. "So help me, *heaven,* my *country* has forsaken me," meaning "God help me, since my fellow-men have abandoned me." "My love is come." "Call a hansom."

2. METAPHOR, or the figure founded on resemblance, which is merely an abridged comparison. In the fiftieth chapter of Ecclesiasticus we read this encomium of Simon the High Priest: "In his days the wells of water flowed out, and they were filled as the sea above measure. He shone in his days as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at full, and as the sun when it shineth, so did he shine in the temple of God. As a rainbow giving light, as the flower of roses in the spring, as a bright fire and burning frankincense, as a massy vessel of gold, as an olive tree budding forth, or a cypress rearing itself on high . . . when he went up to the holy altar he honored the vesture of holiness. . . . And about him was the ring of his brethren, as the branches of palm trees they stood round about him," etc

A few plain rules guide our employ of this figure.

(1) Let it be SIMPLE—that is, neither strained nor mixed.

(2) Let it be SINGLE, avoiding multitudinous comparison, in which respect the above text is faulty.

(3) Let it be PLEASING, especially to the moral sense.

(4) Let it be ELEVATING, shunning vulgarity.

(These are from Cicero, *De Oratore,* Lib. iii. c. 53.)

3. ALLEGORY, which is nothing more than the sustained metaphor. It may be protracted through the whole work, as "The Faerie Queene," "The Court of Sapience," "The Pilgrim's Progress," or it may form but a brief narrative, "The Vision of Mirza." In this form the Parable is a short Allegory,

provided that it contains two distinct meanings, the literal and figurative, which all Parables do not. An Allegory may be a symbolic speech, howsoever brief.

"I love the stately stream, since it recalls
Life's devious passage to eternity.
Oh may our tide of days as smoothly run
Into the ocean—bosom of God's rest."

The ENIGMA or RIDDLE is a minor Allegory, *e. g.*, Samson's Riddle to the Philistines: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." His retort is a metaphor: "If you had not ploughed with my heifer, you had not found out my riddle."

4. SYNECDOCHE, or the figure of inversion.

(1) Putting *genus* for *species:* "Avoid liquor," "He fell in action."

(2) Inverting *species* for *genus:* "To earn one's bread."

Euphemisms belong to this class: "He twined the vine leaf in his hair," for "He got drunk"; "Entered into rest," for "died."

(3) Naming a class by an individual: "A Solomon, a Judas, a Croesus, a Magdalen."

(4) Substituting an abstract for a concrete, as a quality for a person, or a title for an individual: "*Youth* is hopeful," "*Impudence* spoke up," "His *Holiness* said."

Other figures of less frequent usage are the HYPERBOLE, or exaggerated speech; IRONY, meaning the contrary, *e. g.*, "He is a genius"; PERSONIFICATION, "Nature pleads, Religion tells us"; and finally APOSTROPHE, addressing the departed, or the unseen present, as God and the angels.

RULE.—Since figure is purely ornamental, let it follow the rule of ornament: "Simple, in good taste, and not overdone."

VII.—WRITTEN AND EXTEMPORE SERMONS.

No universal rule can be laid down as to whether sermons should belong to either class: the whole matter is a subjective one, dependent upon taste, abilities, and time at one's disposal. Young preachers ought to write out the entire sermon, revise it, learn it by heart, and deliver it faithfully: to continue the practice through life is commendable in all, a necessity for some. It is a burden which sorely taxes the priest tied down to a sermon, if not two, on all Sundays: hence the proficient speaker may readily dispense with writing *in extenso,* but ought to set down his theme, its limits, points, proofs, texts, and illustration, trusting the expression to the moment of delivery. An EXTEMPORE sermon does not mean an unprepared one: this would be to court disaster by talking nonsense, forgetting the thread of argument or having none, "eddying round in verbiage, vain repetitions, and feeble and garrulous fluency." (Coleridge.)

The usage of writing the complete sermon has also its drawbacks. Cardinal Newman observes in a letter of the year 1825—"I am persuaded, as Whately suggested, that sermon writing by *itself* has a tendency to produce a loose, rambling kind of composition, nay, even of thoughts." Delivery of sermons by heart is likely to destroy spontaneity and natural coloring of expression: besides, what if the memory prove treacherous! The sorriest of fiascos is the breakdown, or the painfully prolonged pause, or the conclusion wound up in silly commonplaces.

The palm of merit falls deservedly to *Extempore Preaching,* provided the preacher's standard of excellence be sufficiently high. It has these distinct advantages over the written sermon: (1) It admits of adaptation on the spur of the moment, of special application, of change in style or thought. (2) It saves the physical strain of days of toil in committing to memory,

and agony on the day lest the best passages should slip, as they usually do. (3) It enables the speaker to take fire from his auditory and impart it. (4) It is readiest prepared: half an hour's preparation, pencil in hand, and then half an hour's meditation as such to give it spirituality. The ready speaker is a gem in an emergency: the practised, ready speaker can mount the pulpit at a moment's warning and do the subject and himself credit. In the town of ———, in Gloucestershire, a select preacher was secured, mounted the pulpit, gazed helplessly round for some minutes while fumbling in his pockets, retreated to the vestry and was seen no more. He had written carefully his sermon, went to church unconsciously without it, couldn't think of the opening passages, found his mind a total blank, and got upset. Such a disaster could never befall the extempore preacher. To attain this proficiency the preacher should write the main portion of a sermon, then lessen the manuscript gradually until he feels confidence, keep to familiar topics, and in course of years launch out boldly into the deep. A sermon for a special occasion should be entirely written and learnt: such was the practice of Bourdaloue, Massillon, Bossuet, and others nearer our own day who stand in the first rank of orators.

VIII.—DELIVERY AND GESTURE.

DELIVERY deals only with the use of the voice. GESTURE, or composure of body, bears the same relation to it which the frame does to the picture; it sets it off. Each requires separate consideration.

I. DELIVERY, or PRONUNCIATION, according to Demosthenes, is the *whole* of Oratory. We should call it rather the *soul* of Oratory. The whole subject can be but outlined on paper. Its exemplification calls for living utterance to do justice to its meaning.

DELIVERY covers the *Voice* and the *Speech.*

Voice { *Pitch.* *Quantity.* *Quality.* *Tone.* } Speech { *Time.* *Pause.* *Utterance.* }

The primary aim in speaking is to be heard: when a man can no longer be heard by half the auditory it is high time for him to retire upon his sexagenarian laurels, if he has any; if not upon laurels, then upon his dignity. The preacher must be *heard,* and *agreeably* heard: PITCH and QUANTITY secure the first, which is essential. QUALITY and TONE secure the second, which is the polish. All that has been written upon voice production for singing applies equally to public speaking.

There are three sorts of voice in every speaker. (1) The NATURAL, employed commonly in speaking, with its range from the lowest to the highest natural pitch. (2) The FALSETTO (false voice), which carries the range still higher by artificial means. (3) The FULL or OROTUND (ore rotundo), imparting fulness and body to the NATURAL, used only when effort requires it, as in public speaking. Every speaker has his own pitch of natural voice, he—like the singer—knows his compass and has his proper key; this serves as the dominant note to be modulated in the ascending or descending scale.

There are four scales of pitch:

(1) The CONCRETE, in which there is no appreciable variation in the voice: it answers to the musical "recitative."

(2) The DIATONIC, in which the transitions are mainly of whole tones, like the musical "gamut."

(3) The CHROMATIC, or succession of semitones.

(4) The TREMULOUS, made up of shades of tone.

The speaker should open out with his natural pitch, otherwise the voice seems strained. In the course of the narrative he will pursue the Diatonic melody, consisting of no more than *three* successive tones in the ascending or descending scale. Each successive rise is known as CONCRETE pitch, and

the place which each syllable takes either above or below the preceding is termed the RADICAL *pitch.* The CURRENT MELODY admits of great variety, but the PHRASES OF MELODY are confined within a strictly limited number of concrete tones, practically within three above and as many below the dominant note or natural pitch. The following six phrasings cover most modulations of voice:

(*a*) *The Monotone.* (*b*) *Falling Ditone.* (*c*) *Rising Ditone.* (*d*) *Falling Tritone.* (*e*) *Rising Tritone.* (*f*) *Triad of the Cadence:* a seventh, known as *Alternation,* is but the succession of *Ditones* or *Tritones.* Take the familiar hymn, "Jesus, my God, behold at length the time." The tune is so familiar that it can safely serve as illustration.

MONOTONE, "Jesus:" FALLING DITONE, "my God:" RISING DITONE, "behold:" ALTERNATION, "behold at length:" FALLING TRITONE, "pardon me:" RISING TRITONE, "I will ne'(ver):" TRIAD OF THE CADENCE, "no, never more."

The CHROMATIC scale (semitonic) lends itself to the expression of grief, complaint, pity, plaintive entreaty.

The TREMULOUS scale or function, running through waves of intervals, second, fifth, third, or octave, conveys sentiments of mirth, joy, derision, exultation, and the like, when joined with the smooth concrete intervals of interrogation, command, surprise, or scorn. It is the laughter of speech.

The CONCRETE scale is adapted chiefly to short yet telling sentences, and emphasizes the passage.

QUANTITY goes with pitch, and must be regulated accordingly: it is the distribution of the volume of sound. It may be loud, medium, or low; any abuse of the extremes is distressing to the listener, such as the shout, bellow, roar, or piping falsetto, or faint finals.

But one has to be heard agreeably as well as easily, for which QUALITY and TONE must be employed.

Some voices are by nature attuned to Oratory, possessing pleasing quali-

ties; such are the full, the soft, the steady, the musical, the tender voice: others again are rough, nasal, harsh (like a saw on a nail), thin, tremulous, jerky, forced. Let art improve nature.

TONE is the language of the emotions. When a man is angry, nature impels him to use the wrathful tone, in sorrow he employs the plaintive, in mirth, the joyful, etc. In the pulpit the speaker should be as natural as possible. "Hold the mirror up to nature," as Shakespeare bids us. By proper use of Quality and Tone a preacher readily wins his way to success.

The second thing to consider is the SPEECH, or articulated Voice; this is regulated by TIME, PAUSE, and UTTERANCE.

1. TIME may be rapid, medium, or slow: the extremes are bad. Moderation in speed is required for distinctness of utterance, for creating impression, for catching the theme of argument. Rapidity and drawling detract from the dignity and weight of an address. The preacher who bolts like a colt is many degrees worse than the even paced utterer of platitudes, and about as bad as the slumber-inducing heavyweight who drawls his diapason. Hear Quintilian's precept: "Promptum sit os, non præceps moderatum, non lentum." In large buildings one *must* speak slowly.

2. PAUSE. There is a threefold use of pauses. (1) To emphasize, (2) To mark the sense in an involved sentence, (3) To relieve the speaker. Except the pauses be skilfully managed the stress of emphasis is misplaced, the wrong meaning is conveyed, and the speaker gets blown. To distress the lungs is to distress other people's ears, and preaching becomes hard labor. The pauses may be long, as between divisions of a sermon, or shorter to cut up the members of a phrase: great strength of emphasis demands a short pause before the weighty words are delivered. One has to draw breath *during* as well as at the close of a sentence: a bad speaker descends pumped out, just as the bad runner gets blown. Pause with the sense, and have the sense to pause.

3. UTTERANCE has its three notes:

(1) DISTINCTNESS.

(2) PROPRIETY.

(3) EMPHASIS.

(1) DISTINCTNESS of articulation contributes more than loudness to being heard and understood. Speak deliberately, and so articulate that no syllable may be lost to the farthest removed person in the assembly, especially final words of a sentence. Many speakers drop their finals, swallow their vowels, and chew their consonants. As an example, the preacher roars Our Lord's warning: "You shall *seek* Me, you shall *not find* Me, and you shall . . ." nobody knows what. Take care of the consonants, and the vowels will take care of themselves.

(2) PROPRIETY regards proper educated pronunciation, avoiding provincialisms and solecisms, wrong aspirates, no aspirates, final *r* where there is none: Asia*r*, Africa*r*, and Murrikay.

(3) EMPHASIS. This does not simply mean "force": it is rather "prominence," the expressive distinction of a word or a syllable by one or more of the specific modes of *Time, Quality, Force, Pitch.* Misplaced emphasis upsets the whole meaning. He said: "Saddle me the *ass,*" and they saddled *him.* Lay the stress upon the point of judgment: "God so loved the world as to deliver up His only begotten Son;" this sentence can receive the stress in four places. Its true position depends upon judgment or feeling of the speaker. Emphasis, like ornament, must be used sparingly and with good taste.*

II. GESTURE. Oratorical Action is the just and elegant adaptation of the outward man to his inner sentiments. The advice which Shakespeare puts into

* The seven deadly sins of speech are these: pompous drawl, emotional quaver, melodramatic roll, artful falsetto, snivelling whine, pious cant, and ranting tone.

Hamlet's mouth* should be the standard rule. "Be not too tame, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was, and is, to hold as 'twere, the mirror up to nature," etc. The chief law in preaching is to be natural; as Faust says: "No heart will take fire if the spark does not come from the speaker's heart," and St. Augustine says: "If you want me to weep, you must first weep yourself."

GESTURE IN GENERAL. St. Francis Borgia lays it down that gesture should have eight qualities, as follows:†

1. All gestures should be FREE, to the condemnation of iron rules of fashion.

2. They should be NOBLE, to the suppression of all vulgar tricks of mannerism, such as thumping the pulpit, stamping, thumping the breast, rocking to and fro, etc. Action is noble when graceful.

3. They should be MANLY, and not timid.

4. NATURAL, as opposed to artificial movements of an automaton; also properly timed.

5. They should be HEARTY, not languid nor half dead.

6. They should be HOLY or EDIFYING, not stagy.

7. Gesture should be GRAVE, not simpering in voice, courting favor by smiling and beaming, assuming coaxing tones and attitudes, or playing the fool by burlesque: such gravity is called for as becomes the holy embassy of our ministry, and excludes all attempts at acting.

8. They should be somewhat SLOW, not overhasty and abrupt.

All of these can be resumed under the four notes of ENERGY, VARIETY, SIMPLICITY, and GRACE. Whether from artifice or necessity let the opening be always studiously gentle, so as to command attention.

* Act iii, scene ii.

† *De Ratione Concionandi*, cap. iv.

THE BODY. Study to preserve dignity in its attitude. Stand erect and firm, so as to leave freedom of action: one may occasionally approach, or incline slightly, toward the auditory, but never crouch, nor lean on the pulpit, nor lean over it, nor (if tall) sit on the back of the pulpit. Graceful inaction is even more difficult than action: it lies in maintaining a graceful posture once assumed. Never turn round to address those behind or on one side: the range of the eye is the range of speech, and it is better to be heard all through by most and not at all by a few, than to be heard imperfectly by all.

THE HANDS. The *right* should be constantly used, the *left* but seldom, its place of repose is on the pulpit, or occasionally on the breast. *Both* hands should be employed to convey warm emotions. Keep the elbows well out from the body. When emphasis is required, raise the right hand diagonally from left to right, throwing it forward, with fingers open and curved. The hand must never cross the perpendicular line of the body: move each from side to centre, or from centre to side. In action show the palms and not the back of the hand: keep it away from the body as a rule, or low if in front, and it must never hide the face; seldom should it rise above the shoulder. In milder passages the movement should be from the elbow, in freer action the whole arm should speak from shoulder to finger-tips. The action ought to precede the speech slightly, especially in slow, emphatic passages, but the emphatic stroke must be in exact accordance. The principal action is the downward stroke of the hand, indicative of force. Use an open hand, not the action as of blessing with three fingers: one upturned finger is ridiculous. To express "granting" or "concession," one or both hands ought to be quietly waved in a lateral direction, but don't shrug the shoulders, or pretend to shiver. For "entreaty" clasp the hands before the breast, then lower them quietly to their original position. To express "appeal" they should be warmly thrust forward with upturned palms: for "description" follow nature's bent. Hasty movements of the hands smack of conjuring, up and

down sawing motion is ungraceful; the most graceful motion is admitted to be the oblique.

THE FACE. This should speak with the dumb language of expression. "Thy face, my Thane, is as a book, where men may read strange matters." It rivets the attention most, and is the seat of the soul in an address. All the passions should have free scope and play thereon: the face should be the living chart, displaying fear, hope, mirth, sadness, and the rest, hence it all lies in EXPRESSION. The key to the position is the eye. Who does not know of the power of the eye, the speaking, tearful, merry, scornful, passionate eye! Its flash speaks more than words can convey. The eyes should not be fixed, but move easily round. Remembering that it is one and the same soul which animates the mind and body, the preacher should give free play to its power in the body, that gesture may supplement voice in the expression of thought. Dry and insipid talkers would do well to consider these pungent remarks of Sydney Smith as addressed to them: "To this cause of unpopularity of sermons may be added the extremely ungraceful manner in which they are delivered. The English, generally remarkable for doing very good things in a very bad manner, seem to have reserved the maturity and plenitude of their awkwardness for the pulpit. . . . Why are we natural everywhere but in the pulpit? No man can express warm and animated feelings anywhere else with his mouth alone, but with his whole body; he articulates with every limb, and talks from head to foot with a thousand voices. Why this holoplexia on sacred occasions alone? Why call in the aid of paralysis to piety? Is it a rule of Oratory to balance the style against the subject, and to handle most sublime truths in the dullest language and the driest manner? Is sin to be taken from men, as Eve was from Adam, by casting them into a deep sleep? or from what possible perversion of common sense are we able to look like field preachers in Zembla, holy lumps of ice, numbed into quiescence, and stagnation, and mumbling?"

IX.—HOMILIES, PRONES, CONFERENCES.

1. The most ancient form of sermon was the *Homily,* taken in the rigorous sense of the term. A portion of Holy Scriptures was read, and then commented upon verse by verse: thus it meant "explicatio literalis et moralis" of the full text, and was nothing more than a disjointed Scripture lesson. This form of discourse may be employed occasionally, as in fully developing the Epistle or Gospel of the day, but it has a serious drawback, it lacks unity of concept and point of application. It is the simplest IN FORM; the most difficult in getting up. The preacher's task is to clear away the obscurity which it has pleased the Holy Spirit to cast as a veil of mystery over the written word, so that it is a *hidden* word. The writings of the Fathers are the Gospel unveiled, hence one has to study profoundly the various senses attached to the letter, and weigh the gist of conflicting senses or interpretations. This will prove always a laborious and not always a profitable task.

2. The second form of *Homily* divides the sermon into two distinct sections; in the first THE CHIEF POINTS of the lesson are explained, in the second its practical application is studied and applied. This is a decided gain on the points of unity and profit.

3. The perfect form, according to modern usage, is to select ONE THEME or leading idea, and develop it as in the set sermon, yet in simple form: this is the ordinary Sunday *Prone,* the clearest, simplest, most striking explanation of the word of God. It secures unity of thought, order of development, and forcible application. The best of models is Massillon. It is not so much EXPLANATION as APPLICATION that the preacher must keep in view.

4. CONFERENCES. The Conference is a homely form of address, consisting in the development of one main thought. Such should be occasional addresses to Guilds, or in Retreats. Strike the note of SIMPLICITY in thought and

language and anecdote. When called on to "say a few words" to children in school or on any emergency, deliver a short CONFERENCE.

X.—DOGMATIC AND MORAL DISCOURSES.

"What shall I preach about?" is the question which often rises unbidden to our lips. The whole subject matter can be comprised in St. Paul's four-fold charge to priests, "INSTRUCT, REPROVE, EXHORT, COMFORT." Having chosen one of these aims, select a fitting point of doctrine, either of belief or practice.

DOGMATIC DISCOURSES comprise the burden of faith, such as God's nature and attributes, the Holy Trinity, the Creed, Providence, End of Man, Redemption, etc. Such great thoughts make a man eloquent: they are gold in the nugget, which the speaker must fashion as seems best. Never suggest the possibility of doubt in matters of faith, yet respect the seal of mystery which God sets upon it: simple yet accurate exposition of the article of faith, its scope, God's design in imparting it as a manifestation of Himself, and the homage paid to Him by bowing down the mind reverently, all enter into a true dogmatic sermon. It soonest discloses a precise yet well stored mind, since any one can moralize; but the scholastic *body* of the sermon needs setting off with devout sentiments and useful application. The fruit tastes sweetest plucked from the tree, so too those proofs directly drawn from the Scriptures are more inviting than the same couched in cold, scholastic form. It is not proof but explanation that is called for: the grandeur of the subject calls for more elevated tone of thought and speech. In the general disposition it will be found best to copy St. Thomas' method, showing how the truth in point is worthy both of God and man: *e. g.*, the real presence, divine sonship in baptism, forgiveness of sin, etc. Study the *Summa* for the disposition of arguments; any article would make a model discourse. The general outline of a dogmatic sermon should comprise (1) solid proofs

well developed, (2) pious sentiments so as to elevate the heart, (3) practical outcome of resolve. *Corde creditur ad justitiam.*

Moral Sermons are commoner than dogmatic, and rightly so: "this *do,* and thou shalt live." As a preliminary, the preacher should study well the human heart, its aims, ambitions, fears, joys, selfishness, etc. All virtues should be illustrated by Christ's example: preach Christ, and Him crucified, that is, holiness and penance as expiation for sin. Instead of wasting words over bald phrases upon virtue or vice, launch out into bold description and paint the drunkard, the hard hearted, the avaricious, the proud, the selfish, and their winning opposites. Show up vice as ruinous and detestable, virtue as true gain and ever lovable. There is a harvest of materials to hand in the Prima Secundæ and Secunda Secundæ of the *Summa,* and no maker of sermons can ever hope to rival St. Thomas in the preciseness of thought and expression, fulness of matter, and elevation of spiritual tone; while as to method he is both synthetic and analytic. *Est non tantum doctrina sed et disciplina.* Preach uniform piety, fidelity to lesser points of duty, social obligations, and show how holiness can be marvellous without being miraculous, insist on amendment.

Rules:

1. Have a definite aim in each sermon.
2. Go straight to the point so as to secure conviction.
3. Secure right application of sound principles.
4. Avoid exaggeration, such as laxity or severity in maxims, and highly improbable stories in narrative.
5. Don't theorize, nor talk platitudes, nor waste time over one long protracted story or harrowing details, and beyond all these—don't be long winded.

N. B.—In special sermons the Occasion need not be the subject, *e. g.,* Charity, Education, etc.

XI.—PANEGYRICS AND CATECHIZING.

The MOTIVE of all panegyrics is to kindle a holy rivalry in men's hearts; it is not empty praise of the departed, but praise held out to allure the living.

The MATTER may comprise the leading features of a life, the sayings or writings, the character, work, or place held in his day. It should not extend to mere outline of story; that is biography. The character of the subject should be elaborately drawn out. Some preachers have a sermon which they thrust like ready made clothing upon any saint: *e. g.*, a panegyric upon St. Ignatius is made to do duty upon St. Dominic, with a few modifications; a very censurable practice.

The FORM of a panegyric gives it its true stamp. It is well to draw a portrait; this is done by describing the chief features of a career, *e. g.*, St. Peter of Verona: (1) a model of religious observance; (2) an apostle in his ministry; (3) a martyr. A common outline would be, (1) piety, (2) learning, (3) zeal. One great feature alone may suffice if properly handled, *e. g.*, St. Dominic a true reformer, or St. Thomas patron and model of students, St. Ambrose model of bishops, St. Magdalen type of repentance. It is a grave error to multiply contrast, *e.g.*, in a panegyric on St. Dominic to assign these points (1) St. Benedict, (2) St. Dominic, (3) St. Ignatius, showing three true reformers: the mind is led away from the main subject. Father Burke's outline is a masterly one: he makes bold to compare the heart of St. Dominic with the Heart of Christ consumed with three loves: (1) for His Heavenly Father, (2) His earthly Mother (Mary), and (3) His bride the Church. One should discriminate between an occasional and an annual panegyric; in the latter case the story is well known and calls for skilful adaptation. It is not a panegyric to preach upon "The Triumph of Grace," or "The Changeless Kingdom," etc., and use the saint merely by

way of illustration: on the contrary, preach the saint and point the moral. The end to be well kept in view is to entertain, still more to edify and glorify, most of all to create a feeling of high resolve to imitate, since all saints are set forth by the Church as models for our imitation.

The ITALIAN STYLE is all praise of the saint with but brief application to the hearers; the FRENCH is quite the opposite: the MIXED VARIETY proves best to English ears.

CATECHIZING. This is a most solemn obligation, binding parish priests, and a profitable duty for all priests. Before catechizing let a man learn his catechism, that is, study higher catechisms to be able fully to expound the simpler manual for children. There is the Catechism of the Council of Trent, the Catechism of Perseverance, Catechismus Brevissimus of Augustine Hunnæus given in most editions of St. Thomas' *Summa,* and the Teacher's Catechism. A work of special interest is TEACHER'S HANDBOOK TO THE CATECHISM, by the Rev. A. Urban. It is complete, practical, and exhaustive, though never overstepping the limits of the schoolroom.

Let the explanations be SIMPLE, accommodated to young or uneducated minds: by frequent repetitions the truths are impressed; by constant questioning, and changing the words of such questions, the right answers are drawn out. Let the catechizing be PLEASANT, illustrated with stories or examples of familiar objects, since young minds soon tire: a priest can come to their level without loss of dignity but with great gain of power as the sower of first seeds. Don't stint words of encouragement and praise, be always gentle, patient, winning, and the seeds will of a surety ripen into a harvest of faith.

XII.—MISSIONS AND RETREATS.

Missions. The Instruction should be couched in homely language devoid of any oratorical form or Scriptural proofs, this brings out the sermon in telling contrast. The Sermon should be powerfully constructed and energetically delivered, dealing with the Four Last Things, Sin, Sorrow, Purpose of Amendment, Rule of Life, Avoiding Occasions of Sin, etc. One anecdote in each suffices, but let it be telling and to the point. When the matter of the sermon is awe-inspiring let the peroration be soothing: this was the way of the prophets. Soften down menaces by divine assurances of pardon, reproaches by praise: temper the matter furthermore by the manner, acting rather as a father than as a judge, so can one be terrible yet consoling. One has to aim at solid conviction to secure lasting amendment, rather than at creating a passing *furor* which soon spends itself, and leaves no permanent impression for good.

Retreats. The matter and the manner draw the lines of demarcation sharply from a Mission.

1. The Manner. Retreats are preached sitting, the whole tone is subdued, gesture almost uncalled for beyond play of the hands. The whole atmosphere must be highly spiritual, walking, as one does, on a higher level: the whole manner should breathe Gravity, Sweetness, and Sincerity. Gravity brings solemnity in fulfilling a holiest duty, Sweetness allures and wins ready souls, and rouses torpid ones, Sincerity begets confidence, when listeners realize that the preacher is speaking *ex intimo corde.* Thoughts should be interspersed with affections, with *ascensiones cordis,* hence the prayerful manner is the most efficacious.

2. The Matter. This will depend upon the auditory. There are Retreats to Priests only, to Priests who are religious, to religious women, to active and contemplative Orders, to Religious Congregations of either sex which

have not the full status of religious life, to Tertiaries living in the world, to youths in college aiming at the priesthood, to scholars of either sex, to teaching bodies, and private retreats for individuals. Again, there is the duration of the exercises, ranging from three to ten days; and the motive of making a retreat, from obligation of rule, or from some special reason, and with one definite purpose, as preparation for profession or ordination. To each class should be assigned the common duties of the Christian life, supplemented by the obligations of their respective states. The great truths have to be preached to religious as well as to the laity.

A.—To Religious. The matter must comprise the Vocation or End of life, the Vows, Sin and Tepidity with their remedies, the duty of Prayer, Meditation, Holy Mass, etc. The preacher can map out his matter as he pleases, provided he covers the entire ground: to dwell on one thought throughout, *e. g.*, "the life of prayer," proves monotonous, and not over-profitable: it is always well to have from four to six *schemata* of Retreats.

Here is one of many feasible plans, providing for a morning and evening meditation and afternoon Conference:

I. Day. Opening Meditation, "The Grace of a Retreat," showing (1) the aim, (2) the work, (3) the spirit of the Retreat.

II. Day. Image of God in holiness: Religious Life: Conference on Work.

III. Day. Religious Character: Perfection through Charity: Conference on Recreation.

IV. Day. The Holy Rule: First Obstacle, Temptation: Conference on Spiritual Reading.

V. Day. Second Obstacle, Sin: Third Obstacle, Tepidity: Conference on Silence.

VI. Day. First Remedy, Penance: Second Remedy, Prayer: Conference on Divine Office.

VII. Day. Third Remedy, Holy Eucharist: The work of grace: Conference on Practical means of purifying the soul.

VIII. Day. Chastity: Obedience: Conference on Poverty in spirit.

IX. Day. Humility: The Sacred Passion: Conference on Fraternal Charity, or Our Conventual Home.

X. Conclusion: Address on Perseverance, or on The good odor of Christ.

B.—Clergy Retreats embrace obligations toward one's own soul, then toward other souls: the aim, work, and spirit of the ministry: dangers and safeguards.

C.—To Active Orders. It suffices to work in the particular scope of the Order into certain meditations, or to devote one address to the point, such as teaching.

D.—To Youth in General. Short and interesting lectures on their state of life suffice: avoid suggesting evil to young minds, and deal out much honey of encouragement.

Since the preaching of retreats is the highest form of the ministry, it requires elaborate preparation of reading, note-taking, study of the best models, and mastery of the Pauline Epistles. In conclusion, let the neophyte who mounts the chair of truth remember that very old adage:

Ascendens sine labore
Descendet sine honore.